

Message Text

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SUBJECT: EFFORTS OF AMERICAN/VENEZUELAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TO
IMPROVE CLIMATE OF OPINION AS BETWEEN VENEZUELA AND THE UNITED
STATES

1. AT A MEETING TODAY OF THE DIRECTORS OF AMCHAM, THOSE
DELEGATES WHO HAD GONE LAST WEEK TO WASHINGTON REPORTED WITH
A CONSIDERABLE DEGREE OF SATISFACTION ON THE OUTCOME OF THEIR
VARIOUS INTERVIEWS IN WASHINGTON. THEY WERE IN PARTICULAR
GRATIFIED BY THEIR RECEPTION WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS
AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHLAUDEMAN AND WERE EFFUSIVE
IN THEIR PRAISE OF FRANK DEVINE FOR HIS EFFORTS IN LINING UP
APPOINTMENTS AND IN CONNECTION WITH THE FORTHCOMING
VENEZUELAN-AMERICAN SEMINAR AT THE FLETCHER SCHOOL OF
LAW AND DIPLOMACY WHICH WILL NOW DEFINITELY TAKE PLACE.

2. PROBABLY THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE TRIP, AS RELATED BY THE
AMCHAM DIRECTORS, WAS THEIR LENGTHY CONFERENCE WITH
DR. ROBERT BEST, CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE,
WHO HAD INITIALLY RECEIVED THEM WITH GREAT BELLIGERENCY,
APARENTLY UNDER THE MISAPPREHENSION THAT THEY WERE
VENEZUELANS AND NOT AMERICAN CITIZENS, HOWEVER, AFTER AN HOUR
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OF PATIENT ARGUMENT, THE AMCHAM REPRESENTATIVES LEFT WITH

THE APPARENT ASSURANCES OF DR. BEST THAT HE HIMSELF WOULD HELP TO TRY TO SMOOTH OUT DIFFICULTIES ARISING FROM THE PRESENT LANGUAGE OF THE TRADE ACT SO FAR AS IT AFFECTS VENEZUELA. APPARENTLY BOTH BEST AND THE AMCHAM DIRECTORS AGREED THAT THE SIMPLEST AND MOST EFFECTIVE WAY OF ACHIEVING THIS OBJECTIVE WOULD BE TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION SPECIFICALLY EXEMPTING WESTERN HEMISPHERE MEMBERS OF OPEC FROM THE PEJORATIVE PROVISIONS OF THE ACT AS NOW DRAFTED.

3. COMMENT: THIS FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW SHOULD BE A MOST DESIRABLE SOLUTION SINCE WE HAVE AS AN EMBASSY FOR SOME YEARS BEEN ATTEMPTING TO GET ACROSS THE CONCEPT OF HEMISPHERIC PREFERENCE IN PETROLEUM, AND ALTHOUGH THE PROJECTED LEGISLATION WOULD BE LIMITED TO MORE NARROW OBJECT, IT WOULD IN FACT STRIKE A RESPONSIVE CHORD IN VENEZUELA AND PRESUMABLY ALSO IN ECUADOR.

4. THE CHAMBER DIRECTORS WERE TOLD THAT OTHER AMERICAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY WEIGH IN IN A MANNER SIMILAR TO THAT OF THE CARACAS CHAMBER, AND HERE SPECIFICALLY THE AMCHAM IN ECUADOR WAS MENTIONED. APPARENTLY THERE IS TO BE A MEETING IN MIAMI LATE IN JANUARY OF AACCLA, WHOSE PRESIDENT IS FRED SOUTHERLAND, RECENTLY PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN VENEZUELA. AT THIS MEETING THE CONSENSUS OF THE VENEZUELAN CHAMBER WILL BE VIGOROUSLY PRESSED, THAT THERE WAS NO EXCUSE FOR CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE IN LATIN AMERICA NOT BE INFORMED EITHER BY THE COUNCIL OF THE AMERICAS OR BY THEIR OWN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF PENDING LEGISLATION WHICH WAS ONLY HEARD OF AFTER IT HAD BEEN ENACTED BY BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS AND PROMPTLY SIGNED INTO LAW BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

5. TOM HUGHES, THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF AMCHAM VENEZUELA, WILL VISIT WASHINGTON NEXT WEEK ON PRIVATE BUSINESS BUT PLANS TO CALL ON ALLEN WOLF, A MEMBER OF THE STAFF OF THE PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL TRADE REPRESENTATIVE, AND ON DR. BST OF THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE. ALTHOUGH HIS STAY IN WASHINGTON APPARENTLY IS LIMITED TO ONE DAY, HE ALSO WOULD LIKE TO CALL ON FRANK DEVINE. MR. HUGHES WILL STAY AT THE MAYFLOWER HOTEL.
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